



KNOWLEDGE TO
MEET THE CHALLENGE OF
CRIME AND JUSTICE

National Institute of Justice

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Director's Message

Community, cooperation, and connections are concepts that tie together this issue of the Journal. These concepts are especially important to the law enforcement community as data analysis evolves into one of the most valuable tools for communication and information sharing.

In the cover story, Tom Kingsley and Kathryn S. Pettit offer an overview of the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, an advanced information system with integrated and periodically updated information on conditions in 13 neighborhoods. These data include births, deaths, crime, health, education, public assistance, and property conditions, among others, and are helpful in planning, identifying low-income neighborhoods, and monitoring and evaluating programs.

Elizabeth Glazer's article describes the development and use of a computer system that, at the press of a button, shows the activity of multiple Federal agencies in any given area. The concept was simple: if all the information stored in paper files throughout the Southern District of New York's U.S. Attorney's Office was placed in one database, information that had previously taken days to gather would only take hours to process. The U.S. Attorney's Office can use this one-stop information source to look beyond their individual cases to solve problems that they and other agencies are working on.

The Workshop on Building Data Systems and Responding to Violence Against Women (VAW) focuses on ways to standardize disparate data. VAW statistics have been plagued by different reporting standards, and the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services, along with attending practitioners and researchers, are attempting to normalize the information to allow for more universal and accurate data interpretation. Recommendations dealt with defining violence, measuring the number of victims, and ensuring victim's confidentiality and safety.

Todd R. Clear and David R. Karp explore the relatively new concept of community justice in their article. The roles and relationships of the victim, offender, and community are examined, as well as the role of the justice system. Two models also are presented—one in Austin, Texas, and one statewide in Vermont—to provide more tangible examples of how these citizen-based initiatives work and how they interact with more traditional criminal justice practices.

And finally, the article on the Methamphetamine Interagency Task Force discusses the growing concern about meth use in communities across the United States. The Task Force, cochaired by Attorney General Janet Reno and Office of National Drug Control Policy Director Barry McCaffrey, conducted four meetings to discuss the drug's history, current state of drug use, and possible future issues with the intent of providing guidance for combating meth.

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